The Etymology of Being (I)

The greek verb εἶναι (εἰμί = *I am*, εἶ = *you/thou are*, ἐστί(ν) = *he is*, ἐσμέν = *we are*, ἐστέ = *you/ye are*, εἰσί(ν) = *they are*) had the same two senses in ancient times as the verb "to be" has in English today, that is, those mentioned in the *"Glossary of Ontology"* of the previous issue (**1a** and **1b**). [The from used for the third person singular, could use an *n* (ἐστιν) at the end, as in the stanzas of Parmenides' poem that were included in the first issue.] In Latin this also happened sometimes with the verb *esse* (*sum* = *I am*, *es* < *ess* = *you/thou are*, *est* = *he is*, *sumus* = *we are*, *éstis* = *you/ye are*, *sunt* = *they are*).

These Latin and Greek verbs are derived from the Indo-European root ***h$_1$és-**. The forms for this verb, which arise from comparison of several languages, are: ***h$_1$és-mi** = *I am*, ***h$_1$és-si** = *you/thou are*, ***h$_1$és-ti** = *he is*, ***h$_1$s-mós** = *we are*, ***h$_1$s-th$_1$é** = *you/ye are* and ***h$_1$s-énti** = *they are*. The irregularities for the Latin verb are shown in the following table.

Indo-European	Latin	Greek
***h$_1$és-mi**	*sum*	εἰμί
***h$_1$és-si**	*es*	εἶ
***h$_1$és-ti**	*est*	ἐστί
***h$_1$s-mós**	*sumus*	ἐσμέν
***h$_1$s-th$_1$é**	*éstis*	ἐστέ
***h$_1$s-énti**	*sunt*	εἰσί

The second and third person singular are regular:

***h$_1$és-si** > ***h$_1$ési** > *es*,
***h$_1$és-ti** > *est*.

The second and third person plural followed a longer route:

***h$_1$s-th$_1$é** > ***h$_1$sté** > ***sté** > ***este** > *estis*,
***h$_1$s-énti** > ***sénti** > ***sonti** > *sunt*.

What happened to the first person plural is harder to reconstruct. According to the suggestion made by Leonard R. Palmer (1906–1984) in his book, *"The Latin Language"*, changes in the third person plural would have had an influence over the evolution of the first person plural:

***h$_1$s-mós** > ***smós** > ***somos** > *sumus*,

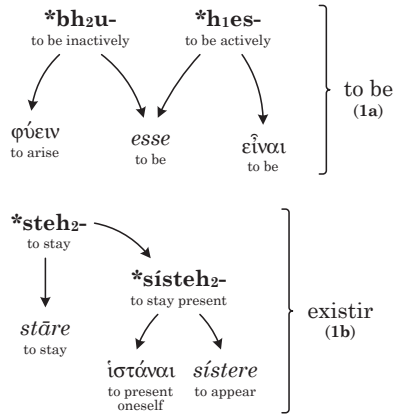
and that, in turn, would have dragged the first person singular along with it:

***h$_1$és-mi** > ***ésmi** > *sum*.

Howsoever this history might have been, it is obvious that the plural and singular first persons have interacted. Nonetheless, no irregularities appear in the Greek verb.

Another very important Indo-European root in philosophy is ***steh$_2$-** < ***stHeh$_2$-**, from which the latin verb *stāre* = *to stay*, (*stō* = *I stay*, *stās* = *you/thou stay*, *stat* = *he stays*, *stāmus* = *we stay*, *stātis* = *you/ye stay*, *stant* = *they stay*) derives. No Greek verb is directly derived from this root. But for the form that resulted from the reduplication, ***sísteh$_2$-** < ***stísteh$_2$-**, *stay present*, (***sísteh$_2$-mi** = *I stay present*, ***sísteh$_2$-si** = *you/thou stay present*, ***sísteh$_2$-ti** = *he stays present*, ***sísteh$_2$-mos** = *we stay present*, ***sísteh$_2$-th$_1$e** = *you/ye stay present* y ***sísteh$_2$-enti** = *they stay present*), there is one. It is the verb ἱστάναι (ἵστημι < σίσταμι (Homeric, στη) = *I present myself*, ἵστης = *you/thou present yourself*, ἵστησι(ν) = *he presents himself*, ἵσταμεν = *we present ourselves*, ἵστατε = *you/ye present yourselves*, ἱστᾶσι(ν) = *they present themselves*). The interesting thing is that the same root resulted in the Latin verb *sístere* = *to appear*, *to present*, *to stand* (*sistō* = *I appear*, *sistis* = *you/thou appear*, *sistit* = *he appears*, *sístimus* = *we appear*, *sístitis* = *you/ye appear*, *sistunt* = *they appear*). The root ***steh$_2$-**, would reference to *stay* in the case of beings that perform the action *speculo* (those which *actively* are). For those beings that not perform the action *speculo* (those which *inactively* are), there was another root, ***bh$_2$u-** < ***bh$_2$uH-**. Both roots were already being confused in the late Indo-European, that is, the difference (which was much more than just a subtlety) between the action of appearing of inanimate entities (those that *inactively* are) and the action of appearing of animate entities (those that *actively* are) was not noted by that time. The greek verb φύειν (φύω, φύεις, φύεις, φύομεν, φύετε, φύουσι(ν)), is derived from the root ***bh$_2$u-** which had the meaning of *to arise*, *to emerge*. In Latin, traces of this root are still found in the form *fuí* of the verb *esse*.

Everything that has been said so far is shown in the following diagram, where the



theory of knowledge that was described in the main article can be seen to be entirely consistent with the structure of Indo-European verbs: (1) to be and to stay are independent ideas (roots) [in the *"Glossary"* it said: *"(the elements in the grey region) 'stay there' but they not are"*]; (2) the verb "to exist" arises from the reduplication of the verb "to stay" (differentiation between to be and to be present) and therefore the idea of "to exist" is a subsequent idea to that of "to be", which probably served to distinguish "to stay present" from "to stay" [in the *"Glossary"* it said: *"essence is more than mere existence"*]; (3) in Indo-European there were two verbs for "to be", one for inanimate entities and another for animate entities [in the front page article a different proposal is made for each one of them, *cogito versus pertino*, which resolves three, by no means minor, issues: the sense that should be given to the words «inanimate», when associated to «Nature», «soul» and «thinking»].

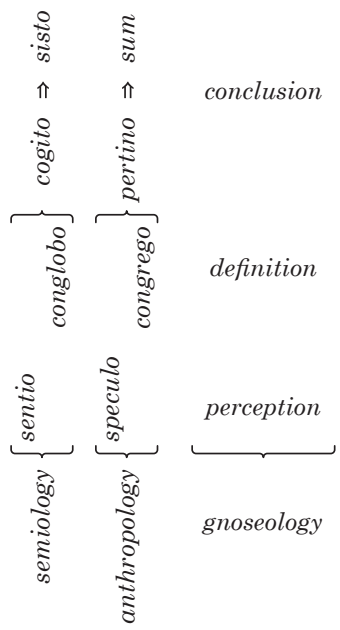
MAIN ARTICLE

Gnoseology

(continued from page 2)

Gnoseology is the field that studies the process of knowledge, which consists of two actions: *perception* and *definition*, successively applied to entities different of the thinking being and to the thinking being himself (and his peers). Together with semiology and anthropology, it is part of that body of knowledge called *the humanities*, which is not the nucleous of philosophy (ontology-dialectics-logic) but is linked to it because its subject is directly related—although in a different way—with being. Semiology is mostly concerned with the action *cogito*; anthropology, with the action *pertino*.

Many theories of knowledge have been developed throughout the history of Western thought. Each philosopher has created or adhered to one. The theory showcased in this article owes some of its elements to Plato, to the great French philosopher Rene Descartes—in whose honor the title was chosen—, to the English thinker John Locke (1632–1704), and to the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant. The contents of



the article was summarized in the diagram.

Ask Jotajota (cont.)

Send your question to: jjluetich@luventicus.org

Alexander from Medellín (CO) asks:

—*What is the difference between semantics and semiology?*

—Semantics is the study of the relationship between words and their meaning. Therefore, since words are a kind of sign and their sense is a kind of meaning, semiology enclose semantics. Taking into account what was said in the *"Glossary of Ontology"* of the previous issue, semantics is also closely related to ontology. For example, when we ask: "What is a sport?" both, semantics and ontology will provide answers. The first tends to be a dictionary-like definition while the second is more rigorous, encompassing and clarifying.